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SUBJECT: PRESIDENCY COUNCIL'S BASRAH STATEMENT

¶1. (U) Below is an unofficial translation of the statement on Basrah released March 27, 2008 by the Presidency Council.

Begin Text:

Press Release of the Presidency Council on the events in Basrah.

The Council of the Presidency issued a statement on recent events in the Governorate of Basrah which read:

Basrah has been the scene of armed and terrorist gangs which are carrying out murderous acts, kidnapping, intimidation and acts of smuggling and the confiscation of the resources of the State and citizens. The Government must take decisive steps to restore security and order. In this regard, we call on citizens and tribes and political blocs to stand side-by-side with our security forces in their striving to eliminate all armed protests and return Basra to the desired path to security and prosperity and building and reconstruction.

And we would like on this occasion to emphasize that the central directives require not targeting a particular wing or current, and are focused on parties outside the law, regardless of affiliation.

His Excellency the President of the Republic and his two Deputies carried out constant contact with the Prime Minister on the latest events, stressing the necessity of imposing the rule of law (Fardh al-Qanoon) and preserving the lives of civilians and their property and allowing a continuation of municipal services to the ordinary citizen without hindrance.

The Presidency Council in coordination and cooperation with the rest of the state institutions is watching the situation closely in the Governorate of Basrah and other Governorates and hopes to put and end to the unnatural conditions in the near future.

End Text.  
CROCKER